

parents and the teachers and the principals and the administrators back home are in a better position to make those decisions than bureaucrats here in Washington. All they want to do is send billions more to fund those bureaucrats, to fund the big government, instead of sending the money back home.

We have tried to make progress over the years, but the defenders of the status quo who love more government and bigger government and more bureaucrats at the expense of the children and the families, all they can do is say "no" and divert attention.

Education savings accounts, empowering parents with the flexibility to make the decisions best for their children passed this House. Vetoed by the President. Opportunity scholarships for the students of the Washington, DC school system. To the chagrin of the people on the other side who say it is taking money away, no, in fact, it was not. That is not true. It was money over and above what we were sending to the Washington, DC school system to go to the poorest students who were trapped in the horror of the Washington, DC school system. An opportunity for 2,000 students. The President vetoed it.

More money to the classroom. Ninety-five percent of the Federal money that now finds its way too often in Washington, we were sending it back home to Staten Island and Brooklyn, to the classroom where it is needed most. What happened? A threatened veto. Killed by the President in the White House.

Who can argue with empowering parents, sending more money to the classroom, providing flexibility for local teachers and administrators and local school districts? I will tell you who can argue with that; the people who wanted to divert attention away from doing the people's business, divert attention away from the fact that all they want to do is make the government in Washington bigger and bigger, and take the freedom and liberty away from the people back home in Staten Island and across this country.

I believe strongly that the American people are tired of that record and want to see tax relief and better education options.

#### EDUCATION POLICY THAT MAKES SENSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, as we near the final days of the legislative session, I rise to express my real disappointment with the lack of attention that this Republican Congress has given to public education. Democrats have, month after month, put forth education initiatives to improve our public schools and to provide opportunities for all of our students. We offered an amendment

to reduce class size in primary schools to 18 children per class. It was opposed by Republicans. On two occasions we put forth legislation to allow local school authorities to build new schools and to modernize classrooms. We were not talking about Federal authorities, but we were talking about local school authorities to be able to build and modernize these classrooms. These initiatives were rejected by the Republicans.

These are only two examples of the long list of important education initiatives that Republicans have defeated this year. Even worse, they continue to propose counterproductive policies, such as school vouchers and tax incentives for private and religious schools. These efforts undermine public education.

Now, we know that a strong educational system provides students with the necessary background, skills and training to survive and to be productive members of this society and the world community.

We have also learned that education is the best form of crime prevention. A California-based think tank recently released a study showing that crime prevention efforts are more cost effective than building prisons. Of all crime prevention methods, education is the most cost effective method of crime prevention. Yet, rather than invest in education, Republicans would have us funnel more money into prisons.

We see money flowing into sources such as constructing new prisons, as if we need to prepare for the inevitable incarceration of our children. There are now plans on the drawing board to construct prisons within the next 10 to 12 years counting on children who are now 10 years old to fill them.

This is wrong. In fact, the lack of investment in education actually contributes to the enormous incarceration rate. Nineteen percent of adult inmates are completely illiterate and 40 percent are functionally illiterate. Nationwide, over 70 percent of all people entering state correctional facilities have not completed high school. In our juvenile justice system, youth at a median age of 15 read on average at the same level as most nine-year-olds.

So it is imperative that we begin to refocus on education and building schools, instead of building prisons. With children attending classes in trailers, being subjected to unheated and sometimes unsafe buildings, or packed together 35 in a classroom, it is no wonder that too many students are not learning and receiving the healthy start they need to succeed in the competitive fast-paced working world.

Education is the key to our investment in the future. We should be constructing new classrooms, building after school facilities and strengthening important programs like preschool and after school programs, not concentrating on more centers for incarceration. By attending to students' academic, physical and emotional

needs, we can prevent the experiences of neglect and abandonment that can lead to misbehavior and even criminal activity.

Investing in education makes sense. It makes sense for our national budget, it makes sense for the safety of our communities and it makes sense for the well-being of our children. It is my hope that in the final hours of negotiation and debate, that this Congress can pull together and give the remaining public education initiatives the priority they deserve. We owe at least this much to our students.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Virginia addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time previously allotted to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

#### SCANDAL IN WASHINGTON CONCERNING PUBLIC EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about scandal in Washington. The scandal in Washington really is what the Democrats and the former majority party did to public education in 40 years.

In 40 years, when they controlled the House and the other body, they nearly destroyed public education. If you ask anyone, any teacher, any high school principal or elementary principal in our public schools what is wrong with our schools today, they will tell you, very simply, it is not just a need for more teachers and better teachers, it is a question of some fundamentals.

We have lost control of our classrooms, they will tell you. There is no discipline in the classroom. Why is there no discipline? Because the liberal policies of the other side for 40 years has eroded the principles of discipline, the power to the teacher, the power to the local school board, the power to the parent. That is one of the major problems facing our public schools today. So the scandal is what they have done to public education in the United States.

Let me tell you about the other scandal that they have committed in education. The scandal is they have created a bureaucracy that is unparalleled